

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUEBEC 00267 152129Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-15 TRSE-00 OMB-01 EB-07 /077 W
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FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1048
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL MONTREAL
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL TORONTO

UNCLAS QUEBEC 0267

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT CA
SUBJ: IS PQ DIGGING ITS OWN GRAVE?

1. FOR FIRST TIME IN PUBLIC FORUM, RENE LEVESQUE YESTERDAY MENTIONED POSSIBILITY THAT SOVEREIGNTY REFERENDUM MIGHT BE DEFEATED ON ITS FIRST PRESENTATION. RESPONDING TO QUESTION POSED YESTERDAY BY JOURNALIST REPRESENTING FRENCH NEWS MAGAZINE L'EXPRESS, LEVESQUE REITERATED SOLEMN PROMISE THAT REFERENDUM WOULD BE HELD BEFORE THE END OF HIS GOVERNMENT'S PRESENT TERM OF OFFICE. SHOULD REFERENDUM BE DEFEATED, HE PREDICTED THAT IT WOULD BE BY A NARROW MARGIN. THIS WOULD PROVE IN ITSELF THAT PRESSURES FOR SOVEREIGNTY WERE CONTINUING TO GROW AMONG THE POPULATION.

2. EVOKING DREARY ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AGGRAVATING INFLATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT, L'EXPRESS ASKED LEVESQUE WHETHER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES MIGHT NOT PLACE PQ IN ROLE OF "GRAVEDIGGER" (FOSSOYEUR) OF QUEBEC INDEPENDENCE. LEVESQUE AGREED THAT PRESENT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS HARDLY FAVORED THE REFERENDUM BUT AGAIN PROMISED REFERENDUM WOULD BE HELD NO MATTER WHAT ECONOMIC

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CONDITIONS PREVAILED AT THAT MOMENT. IT WAS ALSO AT THIS POINT THAT HE SAID THAT A SECOND REFERENDUM WOULD BE "INEVITABLE" SHOULD FIRST ONE BE DEFEATED.

3. COMMENT: SURPRISINGLY, LEVESQUE HAD NEVER BEFORE BEEN ASKED IN UNAMBIGUOUS TERMS THE OBVIOUS QUESTION CONCERNING INFLUENCE OF UNFORTUNATE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS ON

CHANCES OF SUCCESS FOR HIS REFERENDUM. CHARACTERISTICALLY, HE DID NOT ATTEMPT TO AVOID THE QUESTION, BUT ACKNOWLEDGED THE POSSIBILITY OF A REFERENDUM DEFEAT. HOWEVER, HE ALSO ASSERTED BRAVELY THE PQ LINE THAT THE GROWTH OF THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT WAS HISTORICALLY INEVITABLE, BROUGHT ABOUT BY A GRADUAL CHANGING OF ATTITUDES AND THE SUCCESSION TO POWER OF A NEW GENERATION OF QUEBECOIS.
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Message Attributes

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